

THE OLDTIMER

Volume 30, Number 3

The Newsletter of the Josephine County Historical Society

August, 1995

We have a date

AUGUST

■ As always, we'll have a booth at the Josephine County Fair to amuse and recruit. If you can work a shift, it's a great way to watch the people go by. **August 15-19.**

SEPTEMBER

■ Auction at the Schmidt House parking lot. We're already gathering good stuff. **Sept. 16.** To donate items, other than clothes and books, drop them at the society office or, for pick up, call 479-6537. Marilyn Luttrell is organizing this fundraiser.

OCTOBER

■ Deadline for the next Oldtimer is **Oct. 15.** All members are welcome to submit news or ideas at the society office for the newsletter.

NOVEMBER

■ Ballots should reach members in the Oldtimer at the **beginning of the month.** Please vote.

■ The annual meeting, with potluck and program is scheduled **Nov. 12.**

DECEMBER

■ The GPHS Flea Market will include a society booth on **Dec. 9.**

For information on any of these events call 479-7827.

Profile

EAGLE POINT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 201

Eagle Point, Oregon 97524

Commissioner, RCC's VIP, tenor — must be Bill Ford

By
Lyle Felkner

The many facets of this man's interesting life continue in his retirement — and the many organizations he still supports and advises, include the Josephine County Historical Society.

Born in northern Washington state, he went through school there, then came to this area over 50 years ago to work in the U.S. Forest Service with his father.

Soon he was in the U.S. Army in World War II, fighting in the Battle of the Bulge in Europe with the 42nd Rainbow Division. He earned a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star there.

Many years followed when he was



Bill Ford's voice is in demand at concerts, for the National Anthem.

working in the timber industry and building roads.

Twice elected Josephine County commissioner, he defended the Elk Creek Dam, mining and logging. He was conservative about spending O & C money and defended the industry that provides it.

He and his wife have always raised beautiful flowers. Their back yard draws flower lovers from all over during the

summers.

He, Marge Holzgang and Phil Nelson were directly responsible for getting Rogue Community College started, then he worked there as their plant services

See FORD page 2.

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director for 9 years. He feels vocational education is very important.

He is now the chairman of the scholarship committee of the RCC Foundation. That committee awarded \$70,000 in scholarships this year.

Besides being a long-time society member, he still serves on the Rogue Basin Association board as a liaison to the Soil Conservation Bureau on a state level. He is on the board of Greenleaf Industries and helped start the Growers' Market, serving at the market every Saturday for 9 years.

His strong Irish tenor voice has been heard in many community concerts, and with the Rogue Valley Opera. He has entertained countless times at rest homes and for friends at home. He belongs to the Elks and Eagles lodges and is always in demand to sing the Star Spangled Banner to begin veterans' programs.

He and his wife plan to travel across part of Canada late this summer.

And I'm proud to say he's been our neighbor for 35 years.

Savard brings in grant for computers

Jim Savard, our grant-writing, go-get-the-bucks president, has landed the society \$5,000 from the Four Way Community Foundation.

The Board of Directors of the foundation informed the society June 20 that the grant Savard had submitted was being given. We received the check the first week in July.

The money is specifically to be used to computerize the research library materials.

The Four Way Community Foundation is a Grants Pass group that regularly donates funds for particular community projects. The present chairman of the grant committee is Dick Bartle, so thank him if you see him.

Currently, the research library staff and Savard are going over possible software and hardware that would be most useful in organizing our research materials on computer.

Putting information on all our materials, from photos to microfilm and everything in between, will be a mammoth job, but well worth the effort for future researchers. If you can volunteer, let Rose Scott know, 479-7827.

Letters to the editor

Josephine County Historical Society:

When my sisters and I were visiting the Josephine County Historical Society's Schmidt House in March, I mentioned receiving some handmade wedding gifts from Flora and Anna Schmidt.

The enclosed doilies were part of their gift. Since it has been 38 years ago, other items have been worn out, but these crocheted things were not as heavily used. I would very much like to donate these to be used in the decoration of the old house.

It was a pleasure to tour the house and grounds and meet the volunteers who were most courteous to us. It was obvious that the contents of the house have been thoughtfully compiled and it's nice to know that the essence of the Schmidt home will be there for all to see through the years. Your efforts to conserve the history of the house as well as that of the county are certainly to be commended. I am pleased to make this small contribution to that end.

I recall we mentioned a toy horse and saddle that Flora and Anna had given me as a present when I was a little girl. Since this horse has been passed on to my niece for her horse collection, it may take awhile before I can be

sure that it may be able to join the toys in the children's upstairs playroom, however, I will follow up on this project.

Sincerely,

Jean Neilson Johns, Portland



Editor's note: The following notes were received from June Cogle's second graders at Fort Vannoy School. We thought you'd enjoy them.

Dear Schmidt House,

Thank you for the toor and cool stories you told and the old ferniture and all the cool toys! Sincerely, your friend, Matthew

Dear Schmidt House,

Thank you for the tour of the house, gardens. I like roses. You had lots of pretty flowers. Noelle

Dear Schmidt House,

Thank you for the tour of the house. I liked the cool stories you told us. I liked the piano, clothes and the boys room. Thank you for inviting us. Kourtney

Dear Schmidt H.

Thank you for showing us around the rooms and I liked the old furniture. I liked the toys, dollhouse. I liked the cool stories you told. Carmen Lopez

THE OLDTIMER

is the newsletter of the Josephine County Historical Society,
508 S.W. Fifth St., Grants Pass, OR 97526.
(503) 479-7827



Annual membership dues are \$15 and include a subscription.



Edith Decker — editor

Roger Ramsey — publishing committee chairman



The circulation of The Oldtimer is 650.

Mystery photo:

From the "unidentified" file, if you know the names of any of these Gladiola Court vixens, call the society: 479-7827.



In the community

■ **POTTSVILLE PLAUDETS.** It rained. It was cold. The wind blew over the easels. But a few rough 'n' ready volunteers refused to be daunted or leave their Pottsville posts at the society's booth: Bill and Ione Coleman, Ed and Ethyle Lester, Lucille Fisher, Connie Muhlnickel, Marilyn and Al Luttrell, Juanita Anderson and Betty and Morgan Botello. We'd like to say we'll never ask you to sit at a booth again — but that would be a lie. Thanks guys.

■ **WINDOWS ON HISTORY.** The Evergreen Bank display windows have been organized in past months by Joan Snider. In July the west window had "Discover Our Past," a display of books on sale at the Schmidt Bookshop on the history of Josephine County. The east window had a Fourth of July display. In August, the west window will have a display of glass paperweights from the collection of Randall Grubb, while the east window will have "The Kitchen: 1910," a display of utensils and kitchen items from the Schmidt House. September has wood carving from Bob Clausen and a group of women's fashion accessories from the Schmidt House collection. If you have

items that might be displayed, call Snider at 479-5169.

■ SOCIETY TREASURE HUNT MAKES THE PAPERS.

"Treasure Facts," a nationwide publication on treasure hunting of all sorts will carry a story by hunter David Crane of Merlin, who put the society's good sports through their paces in June. Crane was given permission to do a little metal detecting in the parking area and he promptly came up with an old skeleton key that he donated to the museum. In typical form, Rose Scott also convinced Crane to pony up some membership fees. After that, Crane planned a small treasure hunt as a thank-you for research help. All the details of the hunt will be in the magazine's November issue, available locally from Armadillo Mining. Rose Scott, Al Luttrell, Lyle Felkner, Juanita Anderson and Beverly de Young grabbed a metal detector and set out in search of Crane's targets — mostly old coins he'd planted and let them keep. They also found some items Crane had not planted. Crane calls the article: "How to Teach Others to Treasure Hunt, or How to get Historians on Their Hands and Knees."



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"No Body Cares More About Your Image"

History at the center

You wouldn't believe what happened when...

by Percy Wetherbee

Editor's note: This is a string of remembrances from Percy Wetherbee, member of a pioneer family and the society.

Ben Bull, living across the Applegate River from my family since early days, had a steer called Mahagony that came up missing.

When Ben was in Grants Pass he rode by the slaughter house and saw Mahagony's hide hanging on the fence. He asked the butcher who it belonged to. When told, he went home and then rustled up two of that man's steers and had them butchered.

This man soon rode by Ben's and asked him if he had seen his steers. Ben said he had. When asked where, he said, "Their hides are hanging beside Mahagony's hide."

The man wheeled his horse and galloped away. When Ben was later asked why he took two steers, he said he had taken one for Mahagony and one for the trouble it had caused him.



Years later Ralph Bull, one of Ben's grandsons, was walking up the road when a woman's dog came out and tried to bite him. He shot the dog, as he carried a rifle.

When the woman came out to complain he told her to get back in the house or he would shoot her too.

Ben's son Richard (who went by Dick) worked at the Applegate fish hatchery on our place for many years. He wasn't quite as cantankerous as his relatives.

Once Grandma Wetherbee became ill and no one was there to go to town for medicine for her. As soon as Dick heard about it, he walked that eight

miles to town and back and it didn't take long. He was a fast walker.

Another hot summer day Dick happened to be walking past Larry McCann's place. They were hauling hay. A thunderstorm threatened and Larry asked Dick if he's stop and help them. Dick did, at a fast clip, then was gone. He never did accept any pay, Larry said later.



A strange man we called Punkin Center lived about a mile up Jackson Creek from our home for several years. We never knew his real name or whether he was shell-shocked in World War I or just plain slow.

He never spoke except in answer to a direct question. He used to come into Grandma's house — never knocked — and would tilt a raw-hide bottomed kitchen chair up against the far wall of the kitchen and sit for an

Support these businesses that help support the Josephine County Historical Society:

The Publishing Committee is busy working on the 1996 calendar. Thanks one last time to the 1995 calendar sponsors:

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History at the center

Continued from page 4.

hour or two watching Grandma make her pies. She made pies every morning.

He'd watch her put beans on to cook and probably meat in the oven. Grandma might make little comments as she worked and he'd just listen. When he was ready he would leave without a word.

He lived in a vacant cabin in the mountains. When asked if rattlesnakes ever bothered him he replied, "No. I just give them a whipping and send them back up the hill."

It had been said that a king snake would kill a rattler. My dad put a rattlesnake and a king snake together in a large tub to see if they would fight. They did not. One got on one side of the tub and the other one opposite him and they just glared.

A young woman who was just married and called herself "The New Bride of New Hope" rode around on her horse beating up on other girls with her horse whip.

This went on until she tried it on Marguerite Lawless. Marguerite pulled her down and gave her the beating of her life.

About 1910 my father, Guy Wetherbee, worked for E.E. Blanchard when he was developing his ranch at Murphy. Elba Woodard and Shube Robinson worked there also.

After work and after supper, Mrs. Blanchard asked Guy to do some more work around the house. He refused. He had already put in a hard day's work. She told him that Shube said it relaxed him. (Shube was churning butter at the time.)

She asked Elba to beat a rug out on

the clothes line, which he did. On pay day Elba kept looking at his check.

When Blanchard asked if anything was wrong, Elba said yes, that Mrs. Blanchard had him work another 30 minutes. Blanchard laughed, tore up the check and wrote another one. Elba then asked if he wanted him back and Blanchard said yes.

Blanchard asked if anyone in the crew could make wine. He had the grapes. One man from Belgium said he could. And he set to work to make a barrel of wine.

After so long a couple of men in the bunkhouse got a short hose and sampled it. They had some for several days after work, then filled the barrel up again with water.

One day Blanchard decided it was time to try the wine, which he did. It was no good! He never trusted that man with grapes again.

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News from all over

Columbia Gorge center fully funded

The Columbia Gorge Discovery Center has received \$200,000 in lottery funds. The Citizens for the Gorge Discovery Center have \$19.2 million of the \$20.7 million they need for the entire complex.

They'll begin construction soon, they say, and plan to open the center to the public in 1997.

In 1986, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act authorized \$5 million for an interpretive center in Oregon. The commission for the center selected Crate's Point, three miles northwest of The Dalles in 1988. Wasco County and the Wasco County Historical Museum Trust, with funds from local citizens added in, have purchased the property needed already.

As part of the center, which will detail the history and workings of the gorge and river, the Wasco County Historical Society's museum and the Oregon Trail Living History Park will be at the site.

For information on this project, write the Citizens for the Gorge Discovery Center, P.O. Box 998, The Dalles, OR. 97058.

Photographer captures old Klamath Falls buildings

Sparked by the razing of the Stevens Building in downtown Klamath Falls, and the earthquake that damaged so many older structures, photographer Mary Smothers set about capturing many of the town's historic buildings.

The results can be seen in a two-month show at the Baldwin Museum, open Aug. 5 through Sept. 30, in Klamath County.

At the turn of the century, the Baldwin housed the studio of Maud Baldwin, who photographed and recorded the early activities in Klamath Falls, so placing Smothers' photographs there is only fitting, says museum director Pat McMillan.

In fact, the Baldwin is one of the buildings featured in Smothers' exhibit of 17 photographs, all in black and white and taken with a large format camera. The framed prints measure 20 by 24 inches.

The Baldwin Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Thanks

Over the years, the society has been supported by a few generous bequests and many gifts, both large and small. We would like to thank the following members for gifting us with an extra contribution to our endowment fund when they paid their last regular dues.

Grace Ausland

Margaret Purves

W.R. Glaudell

David and Marilyn Prow

Donald and Betty Robinson

Janice Nesbit

Francis E. Farthing

Betty J. Barnum

Linda E. Becraft

Clinton and Oda Wynn

Helene S. Norton

Palmer Zottola

Patrick Fahey

Keith and Merle Woodward

Darrell and Margaret Stafford

Ward Warren

And thanks to those members who gave their friends and relatives gift memberships:

Ben and Connie Muhlnickel

David and Marilyn Prow

Grace Blanchard

Virginia Ford

In memorium

The society regrets to inform the membership that the following members of the Josephine County Historical Society have passed away since our last newsletter.

Charles Tycer



Doris Condit Lantz



Doris Gray Webber

Words from the bookshop

● Sutton legacy is '110 Years with Josephine'

By Dorothy Francis

Its official title is "110 Years with Josephine," but its cover continues: "The History of Josephine County (1856-1966)."

Jack Sutton, who authored this book of our county's history, was an excellent history teacher at South Junior High, now South Middle School.

He was one of those who wanted his charges to know everything that he did — and after that, they would learn together. Only, he'd study enough extra to be the leader all of the time.

Knowing this has made reading his "110 Years with Josephine" a near personal undertaking that I have enjoyed — although my single complaint is that he didn't supply specific dates in many cases.

Very few of its 205 pages (9 inches by 7 inches) are without a photo to contribute to the story. This easy-to-read source of information even includes a small map of the first trip over the Applegate Trail — a subject we'll be hearing much of in coming months.

The 150th anniversary of this 1846 event that opened the Emigrant Trail through Southern

Oregon to the Willamette Valley will be celebrated in 1996.

The author entitled his 15th chapter "First Century of Recorded Rogue Valley History" in which he lists one or more events of each year of the first 110 years of our county's existence.

One of the tidbits in this section is that Waldo had an estimated population of 1,500 people in 1858. Such nuggets of information are found throughout the book like treasure.

The pictures are a fine and important part of this book, but the succinct presentations of the stories relating to them greatly increases their value to the reader, researcher, peruser or page turner.

Dorothy Sutton was also a writer. She and Jack lost their lives in an auto accident on Nov. 14, 1971. They were living in Medford at the time.

Fortunately for history buffs, the book had been completed and published before he passed on.

Our own Josephine County Historical Society published this book in 1969 — one of the many good things the society has done for Josephine County residents since it was established on ... anyone know? Jan. 20, 1949.

"...The first courthouse in Grants Pass was built and commissioned in 1886 at a cost of \$2,400. The county jail at the rear of the wooden structure was contracted for \$334. The 1917 building, still in use, stands on the same ground as the original building."

-excerpt from Jack Sutton's "101 Years with Josephine," the abundant photo caption between the original and new courthouses

Publishing Committee knee-deep in calendar, stories

The society's Publishing Committee continues to be active, but they need your help to get some projects off the ground successfully.

Because the price of paper has nearly doubled in the past year, the work of the committee is obviously adversely affected.

The theme for this year's calendar — which we're working to get out ahead of schedule — is the Applegate Trail. Pat Bristol has kindly offered to do original sketches for the calendar as photographs are obviously hard to find.

While we already have a number of sponsors, we still

need individual and corporate supporters to "purchase" a square on the calendar — whether as a memorial for someone, to mark a happy day or the founding of a business. We also need good salespeople to hit the pavement and (gently) twist some arms to get a few more sponsors.

If you can help, call Rose Scott at the office, 479-7827.

On a brighter note, we've been supported in the Mondays Make History project with the Courier by Evergreen Federal and Joseph Winans Furniture. We're always looking for good stories from our members.

It's a CONTEST for our members!

Attention Members!! The Josephine County Historical Society will be conducting a membership drive from August 1 through November 7. The person who recruits the most new members will receive a **dinner for four at Legrand's Restaurant**. The new members you bring in will be entered into a drawing to receive a free night's lodging at a **mystery destination**.

If you know of someone who'd like to benefit from a membership in the JCHS have him/her/them fill out the form below and mail it in. Additional forms may be picked up either at the research library or at the society's booth at the Josephine County Fair. So go out, get enough new members and win that dinner at Legrand's. (Be sure the person filling out the form notes who referred them so you'll get credit.)

I want to win!

Please enroll me as a member in the Josephine County Historical Society.
Find enclosed my annual dues of:

- ☐ \$15 annually (individual)
- ☐ \$25 annually (family or corporate)
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- ☐ \$1,000 one time (patron of the society)

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